Government of Yukon

Yukon Government NEWS release

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New Campaign Helps Smokers Take it Outside

WHITEHORSE – Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers today announced a new tobacco education campaign that provides smokers with tools to help them resist the urge to smoke at home and in motor vehicles, especially when others would be exposed to second-hand smoke.

"This I can Do" is the new campaign featuring 11 Yukon residents from throughout the territory who are all taking up the challenge to stop smoking indoors or in vehicles.

"Smokers know that it would be better if they didn't smoke – they don't need to be lectured. Our focus is on helping them take steps to protect their own health and their family's health," said Cathers. "We hope smokers will choose to quit and be successful in doing so, but the campaign emphasizes that even if a person is not ready to quit, they can reduce the harm to themselves and to other people caused by second-hand smoke."

The new campaign focuses heavily on alternatives to smoking at home or in the car. A survey conducted in 2008 found that more than 60 per cent of Yukon smokers take steps to restrict smoking in their homes in some way. The current campaign supports them in taking these steps, and to make similar changes in smoking in vehicles.

Yukon's new Smoke-free Places Act makes it illegal to smoke in a vehicle where there are children under the age of 18 years present, and in commercial vehicles occupied by two or more people. Options highlighted in the campaign include filling the car ashtray with mints, chewing regular or nicotine-replacement gum and stopping to smoke outside the vehicle. People featuring in the campaign offer other suggestions to reduce smoking in homes including going for a walk, setting up an

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outdoor smoking area, or restricting smoking to one room in their home.

"This campaign features real people sharing real tactics they use to resist the urge to smoke indoors or around family," noted Cathers.

"This I can do" is heavily targeted at communities where until recently there were no bans against smoking in public places except in Dawson City. When smoking is banned in public places, smokers reduce their overall smoking and are more likely to restrict smoking in their own homes. Several tools and reminders will be mailed out to rural households to encourage smokers to take their smoking outside. In addition, the
Motor Vehicles Branch and territorial agents will have brochures and car air fresheners to hand out to drivers.

Funding for this initiative has been provided by Health Canada through the Territorial Health Access Fund (THAF).

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